

Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission  
Minutes of January 13, 2012  
Quarterly Meeting



Commissioners & Designees:

Cola, Jeanne – Chair

Bodington, Susan, Representing James DeRentis  
Botts, Christine, Representing Craig Stenning  
Evora, Michael  
Fenton, William  
Fine, Michael  
Flynn, Kevin, Representing Richard Licht  
Hammarstrom, David  
Hannifan, Chris  
Kiesel, Marilyn

Kravitz, Tom  
Reed, James  
Ryczek, Jim  
Schultz, Gregory, Representing Peter Kilmartin  
Sekeres, Bonnie  
Taylor, Catherine  
Valliere, Albert  
Vanderslice, Bob (DOH)  
Zaslow, Carrie

Staff:

Frumerie, Caitlin  
House, June  
Kimes, Charles  
Kue, Simon  
Neirinckx, Ray

Price, Darlene  
Tondra, Michael  
Vittorioso, Dawn  
Dennehy, Peter

Guests

Archambault, Laura  
Brophy, Michelle  
Burchman, Howard  
Clement, Brenda  
Gorbea, Nellie

Hirsch, Eric  
Longolucco, Richard  
Rainone, Amy  
Wagner, Suzanne

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Jeanne Cola, Chair at 8:33 a.m. Jeanne took a moment to introduce Greg Schultz, representing Attorney General Peter Kilmartin. She then asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**2. Approval of September 23, 2011 Minutes – for vote**

Jim Reed moved acceptance of the minutes as submitted and Albert Valliere seconded. Minutes approved.

**3. Report of the HRC Chair/Director**

Jeanne introduced Mike Tondra who then discussed the following items:

CDBG - The State has received notification of its PY'2012 allocation, which represents an decrease from the prior year, which was already reduced by approximately 15%. Our office met with eligible communities to discuss how to best manage the program in light of these reduced amounts. We explored restricting funds to specific, high-priority activities and/or high-need communities. Ultimately, in reaction to these allocations, we have implemented changes to the State's distribution plan, reducing the application caps by approximately 25%. This will reduce the administrative burden for the program and keep our awards at approximately 40% of requests received. This change does not alter the ability of communities to submit housing development proposals which are not included in calculation application limits. Application workshop will be held next week with applications due in April.

Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) - The next (second) meeting of this group will take place next week and will be primarily focused on getting other State agency input into the Homelessness Plan which will be presented to group later today. Michelle Brophy, staff to the ICH, has been working with the directors on various initiatives and a summary plan (based upon her conversations and the Draft plan) will be presented to the State leadership in just a few weeks.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) - The State continues to operate this program and will be initiating monitoring procedures with the City of Providence next week. Program Income to be generated under this program may permit some additional activities to be support in the upcoming year.

Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) - A second Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued concurrent with the CDBG workshop next week. The Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) are accepting applications for housing rehabilitation (related to the floods) on an ongoing basis until funds are exhausted. Remaining funds will be allocated on a competitive basis. We have been progressing through the process of hiring a Disaster Recovery coordinator who will manage this process.

Consolidated Homeless Fund (CHF) - The Homelessness Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH), Emergency Shelter/Solutions Grant (ESG) Interim Rule has been published. This regulation applies to a supplemental PY'2011 allocation not yet received and the upcoming PY'2012 allocation to be distributed. The award (at approximately \$500,000 statewide), which would support Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) type activities, is significantly less than was received through the Recovery Act (\$7 million). We are still awaiting guidance on how to access these funds through the substantial amendment process. To assure we are properly prepared, we have prepared an RFP for the subject funds, along with other resources contained in the Consolidated Homeless Fund (Department of Human Services (DHS) Title XX funds distributed to our office and HRC homeless assistance dollars). An application workshop will be held next week and proposals will be submitted to the OHCD several weeks after that. The Cities, which partnered with our office in administration of their HPRPs, have asked to continue and expand upon this relationship with ESG/CHF funding. We've welcomed the opportunity to more fully collaborate with these important stakeholders.

Winter Shelter – OHCD signed an agreement with United Way to serve as fiscal agent for the Winter Shelter fund. Recently, RI Foundation provided \$100,000 in support of this effort, which permitted all shelters in the Winter Shelter plan (prepared by the Task Force previously submitted to the Governor's Office) to be fully funded through March, 2012. Additional funding was provided to Westbay Community Action Program to support hotel/motel stays in temporary situations. A funding committee of the Task Force, chaired by Eileen Hayes of Amos House, will meet as necessary to make funding decisions.

Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP) - This year's Budget has instructed Rhode Island Housing (RIH) to fund the NOP program at \$1.5 million. A joint RFP (combined with the HOME program) relative to this funding has been issued with applications due to RIH next week. We anticipate the process used for other NOP funding (including the Distribution Committee) to be continued with the exception that final awards would need to be approved by RIH's Board. One variation is that we may now see capital requests in this funding round. Over the past four years, such capital requests (eligible under NOP) were referred to Building Homes Rhode Island (BHRI), but with the expiration of that program - it is once again a possibility under this program.

State Strategic Housing Plan – Mike was pleased to announce that the State's application submitted under the Sustainable Communities program has been approved. As mentioned at the last HRC meeting, this program includes funding (approximately \$200,000) to rewrite the State's Strategic Housing Plan. Access to these funds will not occur for some time, but Mike has started to collect information on the process used in the creation of the first plan, which may be a base for the process. Mike said that he will be forming a small working group to focus on this process and then said anyone interested in participating should contact him.

Bob Vanderslice from the State's Department of Health asked that we consider incorporation of required plans related to Lead Based Paint Hazards into the State's Strategic Housing Plan effort.

Meetings - Several groups have met with the administration to discuss the possibility of a State-supported affordable housing program. RIH, United Way, RI Foundation and Rhode Island

Builders Association (RIBA) met with the Governor to outline the success of BHRI and to explore the opportunity of another bond (or dedicated funding stream). Mike said that he has met and discussed the issue with Governor's office representatives on multiple occasions and is hopeful to schedule a meeting with "unusual" suspects (Builders, Realtors, community/neighborhood types, ED representatives) to continue discussions on their impact.

Providence Housing Authority (PHA) meeting – Mike said that he will participate in this month's meeting with the State's PHA Executive Directors. He informed the group of the homeless planning effort underway, which indicates creating partnerships with PHAs. Several efforts were discussed including a potential expansion of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers to target homeless veterans and the need for continued case management services for persons housed in their units. Ultimately, the group unanimously approved a motion to work with the Interagency and our office on this plan.

Homelessness – Mike explained that consultants hired by the HRC/RIH will present the preliminary draft of a homelessness plan which has been developed over the past months through a series of Listening Sessions. The HRC Board will have the opportunity to discuss items in this report before it is put out for more general public comment and finalized in March. Mike then said that they will welcome comments and suggestions.

#### **4. Amendments/Adjustments Process – for vote**

Mike explained that during last quarter's meeting, a summary of procedures to be adopted in consideration of adjustments/amendments to existing BHRI/NOP commitments were provided. However, the Board requested this item be tabled until this quarterly meeting, giving the Board more time to consider/comment on the procedure. Mike said that he received a couple of minor comments on the process (one which designates "increasing" the number of supported units in the project as an "adjustment" and another change which adds language assuring we comply with State open meeting/other laws in voting on any "amendment"). He then welcomed any additional comments and suggestions. Marilyn Kiesel referred to page 5, item 3 of the draft "New proposals must be solicited through an open and fair competitive process. The RFP may be general or project specific in nature, as determined by the HRC staff". Marilyn asked for clarification on general or project specific. In response, Mike explained through examples - in the event that the funds were returned, that would be the general category. Project specific means one project failed but there was an investment in a specific property, therefore, we would complete a project specific RFP.

As there were no other questions, Mike asked for a motion to approve the process as provided. Kevin Flynn moved to approve the policy for adjustments and amendments that staff recommends. Carrie Zaslow seconded. The motion approved.

#### **5. Rhode Island Homelessness Plan – for discussion**

Jeanne introduced Mike who explained that Howard Burchman and Suzanne Wagner, consultants from Inside Solutions, will provide a PowerPoint Presentation that will discuss Rhode Island's ten year plan to reduce/end homelessness. The following items were highlighted:

### Key Statistics on Poverty and Homelessness in Rhode Island

<b>2010</b>	<b>American Community Survey, Poverty Institute</b>
RI population	1,052,567
Persons living in Poverty	142,000 (13.5% of RI population; US 14.3%)
Persons living in deep poverty (50% FPL)	61,000 (5.58% of RI population)
Households living in deep poverty	38,000 (9.4% of RI households)
Total homeless persons (annual) HMIS	4,396 (0.42%)
Total homeless households HMIS	3,008 (0.75% of all RI households)

### Updated Plan will Align with “Opening Doors”, the Federal Strategic Plan

#### Vision:

- No one should experience homelessness – no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.

#### Goals:

- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 5 years
- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 5 years
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth and children in 10 years
- Set a path for ending all types of homelessness

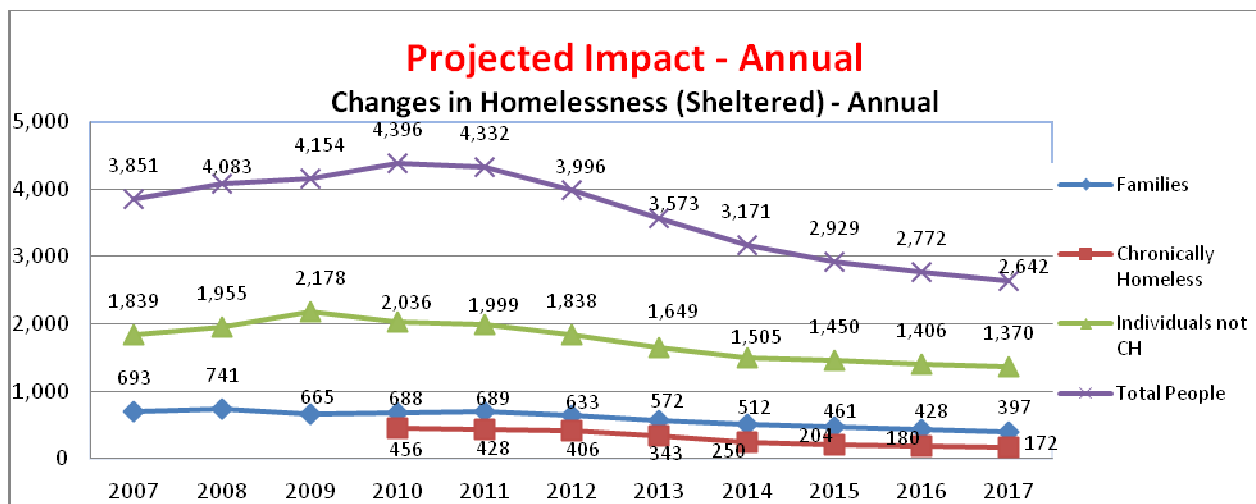
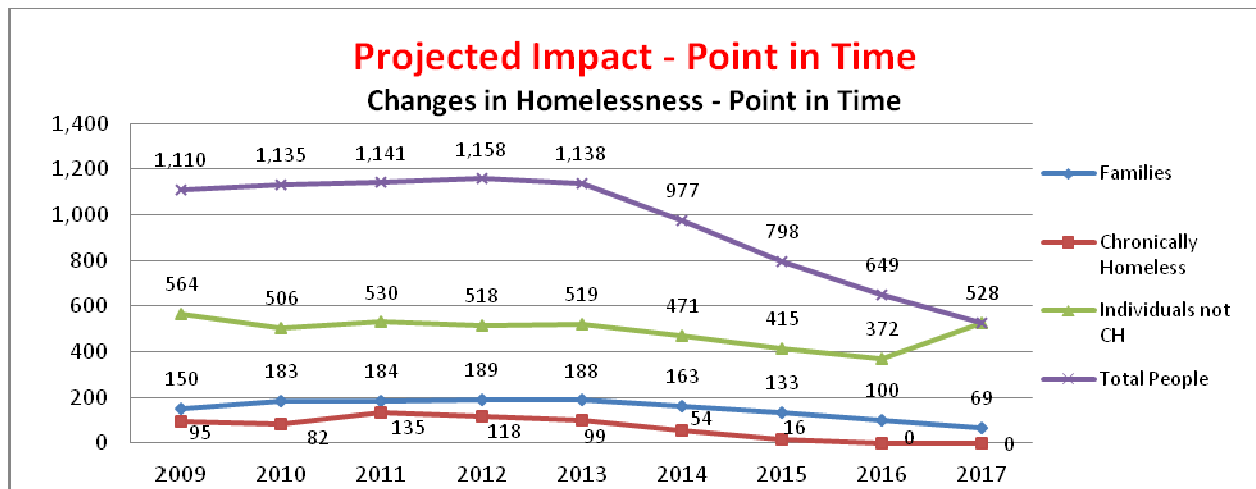
### Focus Areas for RI Plan follow the Federal Strategic Plan

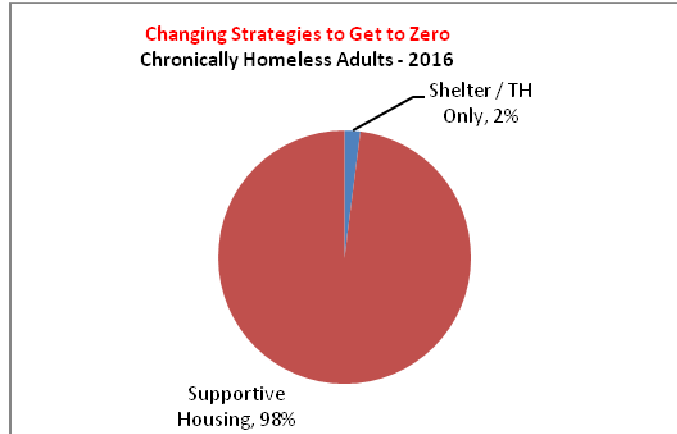
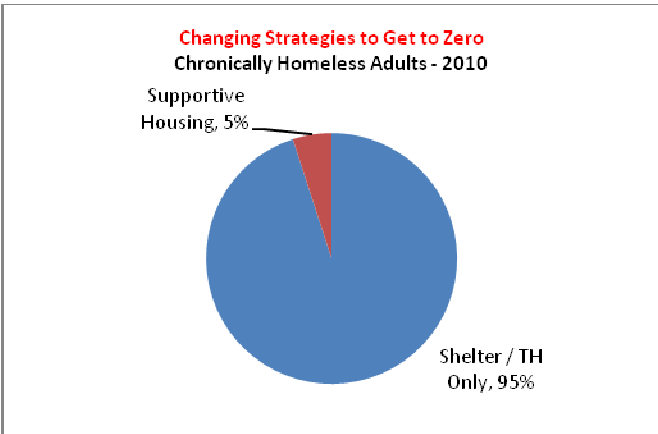
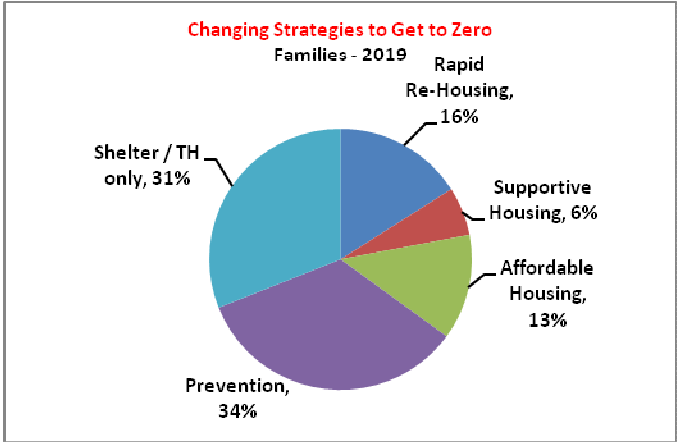
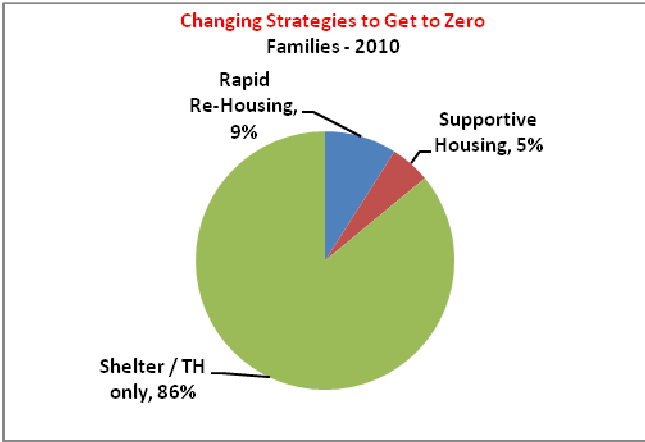
- Increase access to stable and affordable housing
- Retool the homeless crisis response system
- Increase economic security
- Improve health and housing stability
- Increase leadership, collaboration and civic engagement
- Signature initiatives

### Process

- Steering Committee (Government, providers, advocates)
- Public participation:
  - Stakeholder Session on HEARTH and pending Federal changes
  - Listening Sessions
  - Consumer Forum
  - Online Survey
  - About 130 participants
- Research, Data Analysis, & Projection
- Plan Development
- Listening Sessions (total unduplicated approximately 80 persons)
  - Homeless Crisis Response
  - Families, Children & Youth
  - Health & Behavioral Health
  - Criminal Justice

- Workforce and Income
- Housing
- Consumer Forum





### Increase Access to Stable, Affordable Housing and Supportive Housing

- Increase the supply of permanent housing affordable to very low income households through tenant based rental assistance and new project development
- Create additional permanent supportive housing
  - Build upon and expand Housing First program
  - Pursue Federal Section 8/11-202
- Pursue opportunities to expand rental support and subsidies
  - Use Continuum of Care resources
  - Short/medium term rental assistance through ESG
  - Coordinate with the VA on use of HUD-VASH vouchers
  - NOP continuation
- Expand collaborations with PHAs (set asides and project based vouchers, support to prevent evictions)

### Signature Initiative – End Homelessness Among Veterans: Reduce homelessness among Veterans by 20% each year

- Coordinate with VA to target VASH vouchers to chronic homeless
- Pursue increased Supportive Service for Veterans Families funding
- Coordinate intake between VA and Continuum of Care
- Consider repurposing some Veteran transitional housing to transition in place, rapid rehousing, or supportive housing
- Fund program to support returning service members (homeowners and renters) with short/medium term assistance

### Create a “well-oiled machine”- Retool the Homeless Crisis Response System

- Coordinated intake, assessment
- Universal wait list for housing assistance
- Service standards
- Develop COC governance that targets and allocates resources based on outcomes (HEARTH) and plan goals.
- Staff training, info exchange
- Increased cross-sector collaboration (homeless services, housing, behavioral health, workforce, financial counseling)
- Increased use of shelter diversion, rapid rehousing for families
- Examine use of transitional housing resources consider repurposing

### Families, Children and Youth

- Create housing options for families involved with DCYF involvement to advance family preservation/re-unification
- Increase knowledge of an access to Family Care Community Partnerships (FCCP), providing wrap-around services to families at risk of involvement with DCYF
- Explore ways to expand FCCP model to other populations by securing additional sustainable funding.



- Ensure cross-sector coordination and collaboration between agencies serving families and young adults
- Gather better information on young adults experiencing homelessness

*Signature Initiative – Expand the use of prevention, diversion and rapid rehousing for families*

- First response for families
- Reorient transitional housing for families into diversion and rapid re-housing
- Research and HPRP outcomes indicate that limited support has been extremely effective for the majority of families
- Challenge has been in targeting – especially prevention resources

*Increase Economic Security – Workforce investment board to allocate resources to serve homeless populations, with appropriate contractors' incentives*

- Focus education and job training on:
  - Jobs that exist including OJT and skills needed for existing jobs
  - Expand partnerships to build life skills, job training and access to employment
  - Address child care, transportation barriers to employment
- Expand access to mainstream benefits
  - Increase use of SOAR
  - Coordinate benefit application process with HMIS and intake to homeless assistance
  - Expand awareness of Medicaid buy-in program

*Signature Initiative – Intervene to prevent chronic unemployment and homelessness among youth*

- Pilot program to connect homeless young adults with job training/placement, housing and life skills supports
  - Target 18-25 population
  - Document effectiveness in preventing homelessness and increasing income

*Improve Health and Housing Stability*

- Strengthen behavioral health services for vulnerable populations
  - Family centered behavioral health
  - Link behavioral health services to housing
- Expand access to primary care
- Connect people to benefits and Medicaid
- Explore mainstream resources (Medicaid) to fund wraparound services in supportive housing
- Expand the medical home and Medicaid health home model

*Signature Initiative – Target Frequent Users of Crisis Health Services*

- Match HMIS and Medicaid data to identify 50 highest systems users
- Place in housing using Housing First

- Track expenditures pre and post intervention to demonstrate return on investment

### *Criminal Justice & Re-Entry*

- Ease requirements to expunge records
- Work to ensure stable housing and employment upon release
  - Pilot program focused on frequent users of homeless and criminal justice systems
  - Consider using DOC resources to provide housing and service vouchers post-release
  - Examine re-purposing transitional housing to provide structured sober housing for those being released
  - Increase access to existing service resources – collaborations – (behavioral health, workforce) to persons re-entering from criminal justice.

### *Increase Leadership, Collaboration, & Civic Engagement*

- Focus on placing people in housing, not shelter
- Ensure that the importance of housing is emphasized in the RI Executive Branch
- Ensure commitment to goals of plan and cross-agency coordination at the highest levels. Secure active collaboration of VA and PHAs
- Establish and public awareness campaign
- Use clear outcomes (based on HMIS data) to drive performance
  - Data collection that is centralized, accurate and inclusive
  - Track Length of Stay, Homeless Census, Returns to Homelessness and Exits to Permanent Housing
  - Document cost savings that are achieved

### *Methods and Assumptions*

- Get to “Zero” using Math
- Work with Actual RI Numbers
- Segment the Population
  - Families
  - Chronically Homeless Single Adults
  - Other Single Adults
- Estimate rate they could be Served in New System Models
  - More Prevention, RR and PSH
- Assume about 50% will exit on their own with no intervention other than emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Factor new people in and turnover in existing housing inventory each year

Estimated needs for housing assistance over 5-year period

Intervention	Families w/children	Chronically homeless adults	Other adults w/o children	Total households	Veterans (included in other columns)
Prevention	460	**	1,050	1,510	90
Rapid Re-housing	330	**	820	1,510	70
Affordable Housing	350	**	810	1,160	40
Permanent Supportive Housing	250	720	760	1,730	180
New PSH units needed	100	440	270	810	80
Est. households	1,390	720	3,440	5,550	380
Est. persons	3,850	720	3,440	8,010	480

Discussion and Next Steps

- Discussion and Question on Strategies and Projections
  - Especially strategies for Economic Security, Health and Collaboration/Leadership
- Input on Draft Plan
  - Timeline
  - Feedback on priorities, responsible parties and outcomes for Action Plan (to be developed)
- Final Plan Adoption Process

**Timeline and process for 10-Year Plan Rollout**

- 1/5/12:** Planning Committee conference call with consultants. Review and provide feedback on plan outline, homeless needs calculations, strategies and performance outcomes. Identify those strategies that will be focused on for the first 2 years (will be addressed in action plan) and responsible parties for their implementation.
- 1/11/12:** Coordinating Committee meeting – review broad strategies and recommendations. Review timeline and next steps.
- 1/13/12:** HRC meeting: Consultants will present draft outline, homeless needs calculations, and strategies. HRC will provide feedback at the meeting and be told that members will have a preliminary draft sent to them for comment on the 18<sup>th</sup> and will have until January 27<sup>th</sup> to provide additional written comments.
- 1/19/12:** Interagency Council meeting: Consultants will present draft outline, homeless needs calculations, and strategies. The draft incorporating HRC and Coordinating Committee comments will be distributed. Interagency Council will provide feedback at the meeting and be told that members have until January 27<sup>th</sup> to provide additional written comments.
- 2/1/12:** Mike Tondra will provide a written report to the General Assembly as required in Interagency Council statute based on the needs and strategies discussed with HRC and Interagency Council, indicating that the full plan will be finalized in March.

- 2/6/12:** Send formal draft plan to planning committee. Schedule a meeting for later this week to discuss and provide feedback.
- 2/10/12:** Draft plan shared with Office of Homelessness, HRC and Interagency Council and posted for public comment.
- 3/9/12:** Public comment period closes
- 3/19/12:** Final plan sent to HRC and Interagency Council.
- 3/22-30/12:** HRC meets to approve plan. Send final approved plan to Interagency Council.

Highlights of those items in which the Commissioners engaged in discussion are as follows:

Mike Evora asked how the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youths were accounted for as part of the Plan. In response, Suzanne said that the research that was conducted was not driven down to that level of detail.

Jim Reed said that he would like to see education addressed specifically between the ages of 18-25. He then suggested clarifying what constitutes satisfied and resolved. Jim gave the example of someone requiring and receiving immediate assistance; this should be classified as satisfied as opposed to being resolved. Suzanne agreed and then said that the strategies and concepts are not just for placing people into housing, but they will help them to retain housing and avoid homelessness.

Jim Ryczek suggested the Criminal Justice System be a signature initiative. He then said that the re-entry system has a council and will work with the Interagency Council on the Homelessness. In addition, Jim said that there has been discussion around inclusion of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) to the Interagency Council of the Homelessness.

As there were no further comments, Jeanne asked the Commissioners to submit their comments and feedback to Mike by the end of the month.

## **6. Announcements:**

The annual Homeless Memorial event will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Public Comment Period:**

Eric Hirsh took a moment to recognize the work of the Plan as one of the best he's seen with concrete outcomes, measures, resources and design. He then added that this will be Rhode Island's chance to take the lead to end homelessness.

## **8. Adjourn:**

As there were no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.